

Soldiers *Online*

America Regroups

Story by Heike Hasenauer

ON Sept. 18, at 8:48 a.m. Eastern Time, people across America observed a moment of silence. It was exactly one week after terrorists slammed a hijacked airliner into the north tower of the World Trade Center and unleashed a string of horrific events the world will not soon forget.

"May God continue to bless America," President George W. Bush said as rescuers in New York and Washington, D.C., continued to search for survivors and remains, and others continued to support the rescue efforts.

Among the latter was a Pennsylvania Army National Guard unit that escorted a canine search-and-rescue

team to New York, and an OH-58 Kiowa helicopter equipped with forward-looking infrared that flew observation support missions around New York City.

Additionally, four CH-47 Chinook helicopter crews from the Pennsylvania Guard's Company G, 104th Aviation Regiment, loaded 15,000 MREs at Fort Pickett, Va., and transported them to New York rescue crews. Guard soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 103rd Armor, provided tents and chairs for search and recovery crews in Somerset County, Pa., where the hijacked airliner destined for another attack on the nation's capital had crashed.

In all, some 1,500 Pennsylvania Guard soldiers and airmen supported security operations, aerial reconnaissance missions and disaster recovery efforts, said spokesman LTC Chris Cleaver.

The New York National Guard's weapons-of-mass-destruction civil support team tested air quality around the World Trade Center disaster site for any kind of contamination that might have been caused by weapons, said National Guard spokesman Mark Allen.

Two weeks after the terrorist attacks, active-duty military units arrived in Washington, D.C., to relieve some of the units that had been at the

Tech Sgt. Cedric H. Rudisill, USAF



President George W. Bush shakes hands with Guard and Reserve members in the Pentagon on Sept. 16. The president authorized the call-up of some 50,000 reserve-component personnel in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.



REUTERS/Mike Segar

National Guard soldiers wearing protective face masks march down West Street near the destroyed World Trade Center on Sept. 21. Guard and Reserve members played an important role in the rescue and recovery effort following the Sept. 11 attack.

Pentagon crash site since Sept. 11.

Among the newly arrived units were Fort Bragg, N.C.'s, Headquarters and HQs. Detachment, 503rd Military Police Battalion, and the 118th and the 293rd MP companies from Fort Stewart, Ga. Additionally, 32 soldiers from the 18th Aviation Brigade at Fort Bragg arrived in Washington, D.C., aboard four CH-47 Chinook helicopters that were to be used in humanitarian-relief efforts.

Most of the units were expected to remain for approximately 90 days, said XVIII Airborne Corps officials.

Politicians, meantime, rallied world support for solidarity against terrorism. Two weeks after the attacks, Saudi Arabia, China and 16 European nations had pledged their support to back the U.S. war against terrorism.

Expressions of sympathy and promises to help flooded in from 194 nations, reports indicated. And help from several countries came in the way of critical information about the

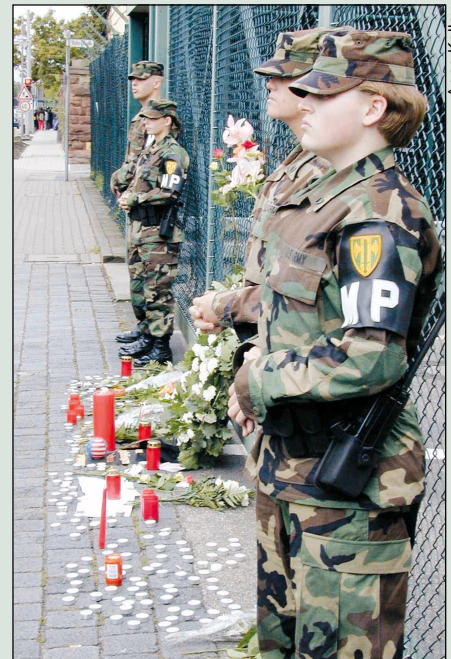
terrorists themselves.

The FBI learned 19 hijackers — many of whom lived and trained as pilots in the United States — had commandeered the airliners. And their spidery web of cohorts spread not only to the elusive suspect behind the Sept. 11 attacks, Osama bin Laden, and Afghanistan, but to "cells" of terrorists assimilated into societies around the world.

At press time, the FBI was questioning 125 people who may have information about the hijackers. It was searching for another 190 people.

In Washington, D.C., Bush signed into law a \$40 billion package to rebuild, and Congress passed a resolution supporting the use of military force against the perpetrators.

Charities involved in relief efforts created new Internet sites to collect donations. Grocery and retail store chains established relief funds to support the American Red Cross and other aid organizations. And moviego-



Anne Kelley

Soldiers of the 709th MP Bn. guard the entrance to Hutier Kaserne in Hanau, Germany, as part of post-attack security upgrades enacted throughout Europe.

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Catherine Phillips



Kathleen Thornton of Fort Belvoir, Va., delivers donated food intended for post MPs and Pentagon rescue and recovery teams.

ers were told that all proceeds from ticket sales and concessions on Sept. 25 would go toward relief efforts.

Hollywood played a major role as well. Several actors donated \$1 million, and numerous stars gathered for a special telethon to raise money for victims and their families.

Representatives of various religious faiths gathered Sept. 23 at New York's Yankee Stadium — along with government leaders, armed forces representatives and others — for a special prayer service led by Oprah Winfrey.

Less publicized were some of the behind-the-scenes efforts at military installations across the country.

Army and Air Force Exchange Service employees at Fort Hamilton, N.Y., worked around the clock to support National Guard and Reserve

personnel participating in the city's rescue efforts.

The AAFES store manager, Steve Williams, kept the main store, Burger King and shoppette open 24-hours a day and called for speedier gasoline delivery to ensure military and civilian rescue crews didn't run out of fuel.

And AAFES vendors donated drinks and snacks to the Red Cross and other emergency operations personnel for distribution.

Across America people showed their support for those affected by the tragedies. They held candlelight

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Nicholas Davis, 3, grips a handful of American flags at Fort Belvoir's main exchange. Patriotic feelings have run high nationwide since Sept. 11.

vigils and prayer services. American flags cropped up on highway overpasses, in storefronts, on car antennas, outside homes and even on the side of one of the first aircraft allowed to return to the skies as it taxied down the runway after the FAA lifted its

temporary grounding of commercial air traffic.

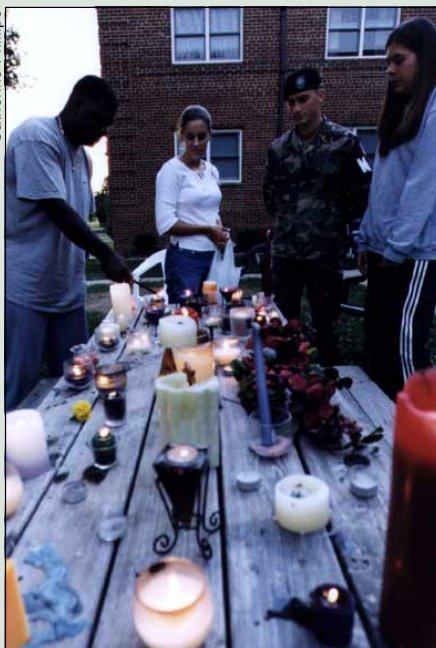
Across America, too, "God Bless America" signs appeared along roadways and on electronic bulletin boards. Shops began selling American flag T-shirts and some that read "Remember the Terrorist Attack Victims."

At Fort Belvoir, Va., where several families awaited news of loved ones missing in the Pentagon attack, Alea-thea Williams began collecting hygiene and food items and preparing meals to take to distraught families.

She and 12 other community "mayors," each responsible for the well-being of military families in a particular housing area on post — as well as civilian employees at Fort Belvoir who live off post — prepared home-cooked meals.

They delivered the meals to about 60 people per night, including military police who guarded the post's gates around the clock, and to rescue workers at the Pentagon. Aircrews

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Fort Belvoir residents hold a vigil for their neighbors SPC Craig Amundson and SSG Maudlyn A. White, both of whom were killed at the Pentagon.



Flags have been a big seller nationwide since the events in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. Here, shoppers at the Fort Belvoir main exchange look over some of the many flags, bumper stickers and other patriotic items for sale.

based at Fort Belvoir's Davison Army Airfield flew meals to the Pentagon.

Williams, the wife of SFC Lester Williams, who works for the National Guard Bureau in Arlington, Va., said a local Safeway grocery store donated \$29,000 for food. And area eateries, including McDonalds and Papa John's, donated some of their specialties.

Yet, as America rallied its support, many felt the undeniable human tragedy of what had happened, as well as its financial and political impacts.

Most painful were the countless personal stories about the dead and growing number of those presumed

dead at the World Trade Center. At press time, that figure exceeded 5,000. Of the 125 DOD personnel missing after the attack on the Pentagon, 118 remains had been recovered. The Army had released the names of 104 soldiers and civilian employees who had been positively identified.

Financial markets, major U.S. and international airlines, the tourist and convention industries, and countless other small businesses were directly affected.

In the nation's capital, Ronald Reagan National Airport closed because of its proximity to vital

government buildings and historic monuments. Some 10,000 area workers were furloughed, though many returned to work when the airport reopened Oct. 4.

The U.S. airline industry reported laying off tens of thousands of employees. And in an effort to keep the airlines in business, Bush authorized a \$15 billion "bail out" fund.

As America's resolve to attack the terrorists grew, so, too, did its patriotism, the likes of which historians and World War II veterans, alike, said had not been seen on America's home front since that war. □

Contributions

CONTRIBUTIONS for Army victims of the Pentagon attack may be made to: Pentagon Victim's Fund, Army Emergency Relief, 200 Stovall St., Room 5N13, Alexandria, Va. 22332-0600, or by calling (703) 428-0000.

Contributions for civilian victims of the terrorist attacks may be made to Federal Employees Education and Assistance-World Trade Center/Pentagon Fund, Suite 200, 8441 West Bowles Ave., Littleton, Colo. 80123-3245, or by calling (800) 323-4140 or (202) 708-4909.